

He is as wys, discreet, and as secree
As any man I woot of his degree;
And therto manly and eek servysable,
And for to been a thrifty man right able.
But after mete, as soone as evere I may,
I wol myself visite hym, and eek May,
To doon hym al the confort that I kan.
And for that word hym blessed every man,
That, of his bountee and his gentillesse,
He wolde so conforten in siknesse
His squier, for it was a gentil dede.
Dame, quod this Januarie, taak good hede,
At after mete, ye with youre wommen alle,
Whan ye han been in chambre out of this halle,
That alle ye go se this Damyan.
Dooth hym disport, he is a gentil man;
And telleth hym that I wol hym visite,
Have I nothing but rested me a lite;
And spede yow faste, for I wole abyde
Til that ye slepe faste by my syde.
And with that word he gan to hym to calle
A squier, that was marchal of his halle,
And tolde hym certeyn thynges, what he wolde.
His fresshe May hath streight hir wey
yholde,
With alle hir wommen, unto Damyan.
Doun by his beddes syde sit she than,
Confortyng hym as goodly as she may.
This Damyan, whan that his tyme he say,
In secree wise his purs, and eek his bille,
In which that he ywriten hadde his wille,
Hath put into hire hand, withouten moore,
Save that he siketh wonder depe and soore,
And softly to hire right thus seyde he:
Mercy! and that ye nat discovere me,
for I am deed, if that this thyng be kyd.
This purs hath she inwith hir bosom hyd,
And wente hire wey; ye gete namoore of me.
But unto Januarie ycomen is she,
That on his beddes syde sit ful softe.
He taketh hire, and kisseth hire ful ofte,
And leyde hym doun to slepe, and that anon.
She feyned hire as that she moste gon
Theras ye woot that every wight moot neede;
And whan she of this bille hath taken heede,
She rente it al to cloutes atte laste,
And in the pryvee softly it caste.
So studieth now but faire fresshe May?
Adoun by olde Januarie she lay,
That sleep, til that the coughe hath hym
awaked.
Anon he preyde hire strepen hire al naked;
He wolde of hire, he seyde, han som plesaunce,
And seyde, hir clothes dide hym encombraunce,
And she obeyeth, be hire lief or looth.
But, lest that precious folk be with me wrooth,
How that he wroghte, I dar nat to yow telle;
Or wheither hire thoughte it paradys or helle;
But heere I lete hem werken in hir wyse
Til evensong rong, and that they moste aryse.
Were it by destynce or aventure,
Were it by influence or by nature,
Or constellacion, that in swich estaat

The hevne stood, that tyme fortunaat
Was for to putte a bille of Venus werkes,
for alle thyng hath tyme, as seyn thise clerkes,
To any womman, for to gete hire love,
I kan nat seye; but grete God above,
That knoweth that noon act is causeles,
He deme of al, for I wole holde my pees.
But sooth is this, how that this fresshe May
Hath take swich impression that day,
for pitee of this sike Damyan,
That from hire herte she ne dryve kan
The remembrance for to doon hym ese.
Certeyn, thoughte she, whom that this thyng
displese,
I rekke noght, for heere I hym assure,
To love hym best of any creature,
Though he namoore hadde than his sherte.
Lo, pitee renneth soone in gentil herte.
ERE may ye se how excellent
franchise
In wommen is, whan they hem narwe
ayyse.
Som tyrant is, as ther be many oon,
That hath an herte as hard as any
ston,
Which wolde han lat hym sterven in the place
Wel rather than han graunted hym hire grace;
And hem rejoysen in hire cruel pryde,
And rekke nat to been an homicide.
This gentil May, fulfilled of pitee,
Right of hire hand a lettre made she,
In which she graunteth hym hire verray grace;
Ther lakketh noght oonly but day and place
Wher that she myghte unto his lust suffice;
for it shal be right as he wole devyse,
And whan she saugh hir tyme, upon a day,
To visite this Damyan gooth May,
And softly this lettre doun she threste
Under his pilwe, rede it if hym leste.
She taketh hym by the hand, and harde hym
twiste
So secretly, that no wight of it wiste,
And bad hym been al hool; and forth she wente
To Januarie, whan that he for hire sente.
Ariseth Damyan the nexte morwe;
Al passed was his siknesse and his sorwe.
He kembeth hym, he proyneth hym and
pyketh,
He dooth al that his lady lust and lyketh;
And eek to Januarie he gooth as lowe
As evere dide a dogge for the bowe.
He is so plesant unto every man,
for craft is al, whoso that do it kan,
That every wight is fayn to speke hym good;
And fully in his lady grace he stood.
Thus lete I Damyan aboute his nede,
And in my tale forth I wol procede.
OMME clerkes holden that felicitee
Stant in delit, and therfore certeyn he.
This noble Januarie, with al his myght,
In honeste wyse, as longeth to a knyght,
Shoop hym to lyve ful deliciously.
His housynge, his array, as honestly

To his degree was maked, as a kynges.
Amonges othere of his honeste thynges
He made a gardyn, walled al with stoon;
So fair a gardyn woot I nowher noon.
for out of doute, I verrailly suppose
That he that wroot the Romance of the Rose
Ne koude of it the beautee wel devyse;
Ne Priapus ne myghte nat suffice,
Though he be god of gardyns, for to telle
The beautee of the gardyn and the welle,
That stood under a laurer alwey grene.
ful ofte tyme he, Pluto, and his queene,
Proserpina, and al hire faierye,
Disporten hem and maken melodye
Aboute that welle, and daunced, as men tolde.
This noble knyght, this Januarie the olde,
Swich deyntee hath in it to walke and pleye,
That he wol no wight suffren bere the keye
Save he hymself; for of the smale wyket
He baar alwey of silver a smal clyket,
With which, whan that hym leste, he it unshette.
And whan he wolde paye his wyf hir dette
In somer sesoun, thider wolde he go,
And May his wyf, and no wight but they two;
And thynges whiche that were nat doon abedde,
He in the gardyn parfourned hem and spedde.
And in this wyse, many a murye day,
Lived this Januarie and fresshe May.
But worldly joye may nat alwey dure
To Januarie, ne to no creature.
Hap! O thou fortune
instable!
Lyk to the scorpion so deceyvable
That flatterest with thyn heed whan
thou wolt styng;
Thy tayl is deeth, thurgh thyn en-
venymynge.
O brotil joye! O sweete venym queynte!
O monstre, that so subtilly kanst peynte
Thy yiftes, under hewe of stidefastnesse,
That thou deceyvest bothe moore and lesse!
Why hastow Januarie thus deceyved,
That haddest hym for thy ful freend receyved?
And now thou hast biraft hym bothe his eyen,
for sorwe of which desireth he to dyen.
Alas! this noble Januarie free,
Amydde his lust and his prosperitee,
Is woxen blynd, and that al sodeynly!
He wepeth and he wayleth pitously;
And therewithal the fyr of jalousye,
Lest that his wyf sholde falle in som folye,
So brente his herte, that he wolde fayn
That som man bothe hym and hire had slayn;
for neither after his deeth, nor in his lyf,
Ne wolde he that she were love ne wyf,
But evere lyve as wydwe in clothes blake,
Soulas the turtle that lost hath hire make.
Atte laste, after a monthe or tweye,
His sorwe gan aswage, sooth to seye;
for whan he wiste it may noon oother be,
He paciently took his adversitee;
Save, out of doute, he may nat forgoon
That he nas jalous everemoore in oon.

Which jalousye it was so outrageous,
That neither in halle, nyn noon oother hous,
Ne in noon oother place, neverthemo,
He nolde suffre hire for to ryde or go,
But if that he had bond on hire alway;
for which ful ofte wepeth fresshe May,
That loveth Damyan so benyngnely
That she moot outhur dyen sodeynly,
Or elles she moot han hym as hir leste;
She wayteth whan hir herte wolde breste.
DON that oother syde Damyan
Bicomen is the sorwefulleste man
That evere was; for neither nyght ne day
Ne myghte he speke a word to fresshe May,
As to his purpos, of no swich matere,
But if that Januarie moste it heere,
That hadde an hand upon hire evermo.
But natheles, by writyng to and fro
And privee signes, wiste he what she mente;
And she knew eek the fyn of his entente.
JANUARIE! what myghte it thee
availle,
Thou myghtest se as fer as shippes
saile?
for also good is blynd deceyved be,
As he deceyved whan a man may se.
Lo, Argus, which that hadde an hondred eyen,
for al that evere he koude poure or pryen,
Yet was he blent; and, God woot, so been mo,
That wenen wisly that it be nat so.
Passe over is an ese, I sey namoore.
This fresshe May, that I spak of so yooore,
In warm wex hath emprented the clyket
That Januarie bar of the smale wyket,
By which into his gardyn ofte he wente.
And Damyan, that knew al hire entente,
The clyket countrefeted pryvely;
Ther nys namoore to seye; but hastily
Som wonder by this clyket shal bityde,
Which ye shul heeren, if ye wole abyde.
NOBLE Ovyde! ful sooth seystou,
God woot!
What sleighte is it, though it be long
and hoot,
That he nyl fynde it out in som
manere?
By Piramus and Tesbee may men leere;
Though they were kept ful longe streite overal,
They been accorded, rownyng thurgh a wal,
Ther no wight koude han founde out swich a
sleighte.
AT now to purpos; er that dayes eighte
Were passed, er the monthe of Juyl, bifille
That Januarie hath caught so greet a wille,
Thurgh eggynge of his wyf, hym for to pleye
In his gardyn, and no wight but they tweye,
That in a morwe unto this May seith he:
Rys up, my wyf, my love, my lady free;
The turtles voys is herd, my dowwe sweete;
The wynter is goon, with alle his reynes weete;
Com forth now, with thyne eyen columbyn!
How fairer been thy brestes than is wyn!
The gardyn is enclosed al aboute;

Huctor

Huctor